



**H.B. No. 5283, AN ACT CONCERNING THE EDUCATION COST SHARING
GRANT FORMULA AND THE FUNDING OF OTHER EDUCATION
PROGRAMS**

Date: March 3, 2022

Senator Douglas McCrory
Representative Bobby Sanchez
Members of the Education Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3100
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Douglas McCrory, Representative Bobby Sanchez and members of the Education Committee:

The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), which represents the superintendents of Connecticut's public schools and over a hundred other executive district leaders, has serious concerns about the ECS and public schools of choice funding changes in **H.B. 5283 – “An Act Concerning The Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Grant Formula and the Funding of Other Education Programs.”** To summarize these concerns, the bill:

1. Would be very expensive to implement (even if the costs start in FY 2025). In its analysis of S.B. 948 from 2021, a similar bill in content, the Office of Fiscal Analysis estimated the FY 2023 General Fund impact of this bill would be around \$400 million.
2. Requires the implementation of ECS losses for about half of the State's municipalities from FY 2024-2029. In CAPSS' Blueprint,ⁱ a complete ECS hold harmless (currently scheduled for this biennium) would be implemented.
3. Does not fully address the inequitableⁱⁱ issues associated with the funding of public schools of choice. Here are some examples:

- a. Magnet school funding is not consistent. Generally, the bill establishes magnet funding based on the ECS Foundation of \$11,525 times a need weighted student count but:
 - i. For non-Board of Education operators, whose programs assist with “Sheff”, an additional 15% would be added to the student need weight. Beginning in FY 2026, these operators would also receive an annual Foundation increase based on personal income growth or inflation, whichever is higher.
 - ii. BOE operators do not get the “Sheff” bonus or an automatic increase in the Foundation. Additionally, the per student state subsidy will vary based on the calculation of each sending town’s student needs. The State Department of Education will have to compute and provide these calculations to the magnet operators.
- b. Inclusion of students in ECS counts is uneven.
 - i. Magnet school and vocational agriculture students are in their hometown’s ECS counts but Open Choice students are removed from the ECS counts for both sending and receiving communities.
- c. Special Education and Costs for Students Needing Accommodations (504) continue to be costs for home districts
 - i. Open Choice home districts will not have any ECS to defray those costs.

While CAPSS does not support H.B. 5283 in total, CAPSS does support Section 11 of the bill which would establish a task force that would study education funding, accountability, and preparing students for success in college, careers, and life. CAPSS would be honored to serve on this task force.

Sincerely,



Fran Rabinowitz,
Executive Director
Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
